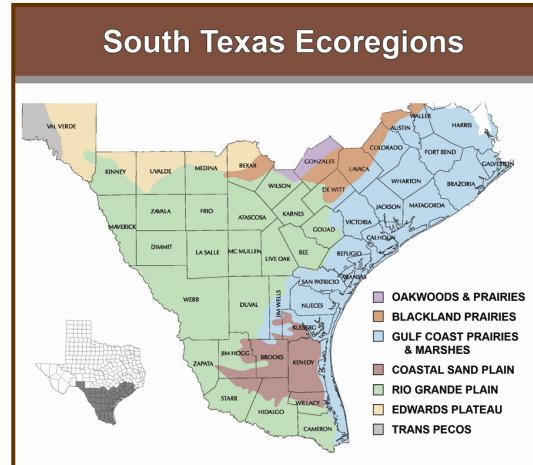


## Description

Falfurrias Germplasm big sacaton (*Sporobolus wrightii* Munro ex Scribn.) was originally collected near Falfurrias, Texas. Big sacaton is a native, warm-season grass that forms dense clumps. It is a coarse, upright bunchgrass that can grow from 3 to 8 feet tall. Leaves width can range from 1 to 2½ inches wide and can grow up to 1 foot long. The pale flowers of big sacaton form in stiff, upright clusters 1 to 2 feet long.

## Uses and Adaptation

Big sacaton grows primarily on heavier soils in lowland or wetland sites. It is tolerant of highly alkaline and saline soil, and can tolerate poorly drained soils and seasonally flooded areas. The plant is also found on open areas such as rocky slopes, plateaus, and mesas.



Big sacaton may be used in pure stands or as part of a rangeland seeding mix for highly alkaline soils. The plant is useful for revegetating saline soils throughout the Southwest and is beneficial plant for erosion control conservation practices such as vegetative barriers or herbaceous wind barriers. Big sacaton is an effective alternative plant for stabilizing watershed structures and flood plain areas. Big sacaton is also useful for wildlife cover.

The Falfurrias Germplasm release of big sacaton was chosen because of its ability to produce abundant forage, especially on droughty, alkaline, and saline sites and its ability to produce nutritious, green forage throughout the winter months in south Texas.

Falfurrias Germplasm has performed well at locations in the Rio Grande Plain, Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes, and Rolling Plains regions of Texas. Big sacaton also occurs naturally in the

Edwards Plateau and Trans Pecos regions of Texas. Falfurrias Germplasm may be adapted to these two regions as well, but this has not been verified through field testing.

## Planting Methods

Seedbed preparation should begin well in advance of planting. Establish a clean, weed-free seedbed by either tillage or herbicides. Prior to planting, the site should be firm and have accumulated soil moisture. Seeding should occur in early spring. Where there are few cool-season weeds, big sacaton can also be seeded in the fall.

Big sacaton can be seeded using a grass drill with a small seed box. Broadcast seeding may be used in areas not easily planted with a drill, but additional practices to encourage good seed to soil contact, such as cultipacking and harrowing, may be necessary after planting. Sand can be mixed with seed to aid in distribution. There are approximately 2,000,000 seeds per pound of big sacaton.

Seed should be planted 1/8 to 1/4 inch deep. It is better to plant too shallow than too deep. A seeding rate of 1/2 to 1



pound of pure live seed (PLS) per acre is recommended. This corresponds to planting 20 to 40 live seeds per square foot. When planting a mixture, the rate of big sacaton should be reduced according to the total percentage desired in the mixture. Plants can also be grown in small containers and then transplanted for establishment of vegetative barriers in concentrated flow areas. On saline soils, weed-free mulch can be used to improve establishment. Establishment is highly dependent on good rainfall or irrigation.

## Management

Big sacaton should not be grazed within the first year of planting. Contact your local NRCS office for assistance in developing a Prescribed Grazing Plan if it will be utilized for grazing. Big sacaton will benefit from an annual mowing at an 18-24 inch height when used as a vegetative barrier or herbaceous wind barrier and not subjected to grazing pressure.

## Availability

Falfurrias Germplasm big sacaton (PI-434453) was released in 1989. Breeder seed will be maintained by the E. "Kika" de la Garza Plant Materials Center in conjunction with Texas Foundation Seed Service. Breeder seed may be obtained by contacting the PMC.

## For More Information

E. "Kika" de la Garza Plant Materials Center  
3409 North FM 1355  
Kingsville, Texas 78363  
Phone: 361-595-1313  
<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/stpmc/>

or

Plant Materials Specialist  
USDA-NRCS  
WR Poage Federal Building  
101 South Main Street  
Temple, Texas 76501-7682  
Phone: 254-742-9888

or

Your local USDA Natural Resources  
Conservation Service Office

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Revised February 2007



# Falfurrias Germplasm

## Big Sacaton

*Sporobolus wrightii*  
*Munro ex Scribn.*



**E. "Kika" de la Garza  
Plant Materials Center  
Kingsville, Texas**